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department, but also by the use which the student may make of his training in the commercial world. Trade, commerce, manufactures, inventions are more and more to require the specialized training of the schools. Schools of technology and the scientific schools of the great universities mean this, and mean this alone ; and the secondary school should be in the line of promoting this application of a wise and thorough study of physical laws and forces to the improvement of the conditions of human life.

In conclusion, the time needed for an expansion of the study of the sciences must come from the languages ; mathematics cannot supply it, for mathematics have received only moderate development in the secondary schools during the past twenty years. Solid geometry is taught in some schools, as is plane trigonometry, but in only a few relatively. The time devoted to them cannot be curtailed, for instruction in the sciences, physics notably, requires all the mathematics a boy can get outside of college as studies are now arranged.

The languages must supply the needed time, and science study should be developed.

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Worcester Academy, Worcester, Mass. July, 1893.

THE STUDY OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

" If a gentleman be to study any language it ought to be that of his own country " was well said by John Locke two hundred years ago. To-day the value of the study of English composition and literature is more fully recognized than ever before. Nevertheless the lamentable confusion which exists with regard to the standards to be reached, and as to practical methods of instruction has thus far rendered the attainment of the best results impossible.

That many of our college youth cannot write their mother tongue with correctness, to say nothing of elegance, will be painfully evident to anyone who takes the trouble to glance over a few pages of a college journal, or to read some of the official documents of college athletic organizations. On the other hand

a visit to half a dozen rooms in a college dormitory will give one an idea of the kind of literature which most undergraduates read from choice. A survey of the tables and bookcases can hardly fail to convince one that the lightest kind of ephemeral fiction is devoured in astonishing quantities, and that the English classics are usually ignored. We believe that this unfortunate state of affairs is largely due to the lack of a proper system of instruction in English, and to the sentiment, sometimes expressed in high educational circles, that English is to a very great extent a subject for self-instruction.

Now it is a fact that the ability to express one's idea clearly and correctly is more essential to success in life than is a knowledge of Latin, Greek and Higher Mathematics ; and that the refining influence of a taste for the best literature should be considered of great importance in any scheme of liberal culture. "Be your own palace or the world's your gaol." These two truths should guide us in all attempts to establish a correct system of instruction. Holding them in mind let us ask, What is the present standard in English for admission to an American college of the first rank? Most of the New England colleges have adopted a uniform requirement which is usually stated somewhat as follows :—"The candidate for admission will be required to write a short composition on one of several subjects announced at the time of the examination. In 1893 the subjects will be drawn from one or more of the following works : Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Twelfth Night ; Scott's Marmion ; Longfellow's Courtship of Miles Standish ; The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers in the Spectator ; Macaulay's Second Essay on the Earl of Chatham ; Emerson's American Scholar ; Irving's Sketch Book ; Scott's Ivanhoe ; Dicken's David Copperfield. Every candidate is expected to have read intelligently all the books prescribed. He will also be expected to correct specimens of bad English."

That for some years there has been an improvement in the English requirements is due to the thoughtful work of the commission of colleges in New England on admission examinations. But though the present requirements are better than former ones, they satisfy neither the colleges nor the schools, and have been adopted merely tentatively until some more efficient plan can be devised. The last Princeton catalogue gives evidence of this

when it calls the attention of preparatory schools to the need of a more thorough study of elementary English. A need is strongly felt by many of the college faculties. No first class school would dare to risk its reputation by sending up for examination men so poorly fitted in Latin and Mathematics as are the majority of its graduates in English. The schools admit this, and apologize for it by saying that it is impossible to anticipate the college requirements in English so as to prepare pupils properly. This statement seems incredible, and yet it confirms what has been said above with regard to the anarchical state of the study of English.

Much of the present confusion might be avoided if a clear understanding could be reached concerning the division of the work between school and college. As matters now stand, the entire ground is gone over in the schools in a superficial way, and hence must be gone over again in the colleges. In education it is usually more difficult to go over work that has once been poorly done than to do it properly from the beginning. The schools and colleges should make a satisfactory application of the principle of the division of labor. Let the colleges declare as does Cornell, that "No student markedly deficient in English will be admitted to any of the courses of the University," and let them strictly enforce this rule. No one who cannot express himself clearly in good English prose should be considered fit to become a candidate for a university degree. Furthermore, if necessary, an outline might be given of the twenty or thirty simple kinds of errors that are repeated over and over again by applicants for admission. If this were done the schools would have no more difficulty in anticipating the college requirements in English than they now have in anticipating them in Latin and Greek.

A word with regard to the way in which one should be taught to write English. Nearly all great writers have been accustomed from youth to express themselves fluently on paper. When Hawthorne was twelve years old, an uncle gave him a note book with the advice written on the first leaf, "Write out your thoughts, some every day, in as good words as you can, upon any and all subjects, as it is one of the best means of your securing for maturer years command of thought and language." Pupils should have practice in the art of writing. The report recently published by the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric of Harvard College clearly shows that in a majority of the best

New England schools the amount of composition work done is by no means as great as it should be, and that the way in which it is done frequently deprives the exercise of much of its value.

To secure the best results the compositions should at first be narrative or descriptive, and connected with the personal experiences and observations of the writer. The first thought of the average boy when a composition is to be written is to fly to a book of reference for ideas. Hence, subjects should be chosen that render this impossible. Later in the course much interest may be aroused by argumentative subjects. The writer has heard a class of boys, divided into sides, discuss the question, "Does the United States need a Powerful Navy?" with the eager interest they would have displayed on the football field; whereas if they had been writing on a subject like "Napoleon," each would have droned out a list of dates, gotten from an encyclopædia, that would make Argos himself sleepy. Variety may be given to an exercise by allowing each boy to write on his special fad, giving to a skilled wheelman the bicycle, for a subject, letting the amateur photographer write on photography, etc. During the last school year the subjects must of course be drawn largely from the books required for college.

When a class of boys have been well trained in the manner indicated above, they can write plain English. They now are ready to be taken in hand by the college professor and may be taught the beauties of force and style. But where the time has to be spent in college in teaching students how to avoid the simplest errors, the result cannot but be disheartening to all parties concerned. The writing of clear English prose then should be rigorously exacted for admission to college.

In looking at the requirements in literature, let us ask, What is the object in requiring the applicant to read a selection from the English classics? To this question there are two good answers. In the first place, there can be no clear writing without what Milton called "industrious and select reading;" and, in the second place, the object is to cultivate a taste for the best thought. "To make boys learn to read and then place no good books within their reach," says Sir Walter Scott, "is to give men an appetite and then leave nothing in the pantry save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve."

The present system of requiring about a dozen books by as many different authors has been gravely criticised by high authorities as fostering "that disconnected reading of books apart from those natural relations to life which alone can fully explain them, that in other cases we do not hesitate to call desultory." "If the books required are intended as a preparation for the historical and critical study of literature, they are left swinging loose without being applied or utilized either in the examination or in the college course ; if they are intended as an aid to proficiency in composition, they are prescribed too copiously, and read too superficially, to furnish any real impulse to invention or insight into the principles of style." In short, they are not as efficient as they should be in aiding clear writing, or in cultivating a taste for the best thought. To force at the point of the bayonet a class of youth of varying abilities and tastes to read a fixed list of books is incurring a very grave responsibility.

The system also errs in that it entirely disregards the value of biography as an aid to liberal culture. The study of the noble life in connection with the works of the noble mind has an interest and a value for the young which nothing else can replace. Think of the influence for good of a thorough mental acquaintance with Longfellow or Lowell ! The atmosphere which surrounded these men, the things towards which their interest went out, the sources from which they drew their inspiration, the way in which the common experiences of life, so familiar to us all, grew beautiful under the influence of their poetic imagination, a familiarity with all these would civilize a man's whole life ! The fact that chance is not an element of success in life, that nothing is attained by the brightest mind without that infinite patience and labor which in itself is genius, the brave way in which these great men met the severe trials that they were called on to endure ; an understanding of all these things would be a most healthful remedy for the warped and unreal ideas of life which are so often entertained by the young. Or take the life of Scott, his domestic tastes, his kindly interest in the humblest persons around him, the heroic way in which he nerved himself to meet single-handed the overwhelming catastrophe of the failure of *Constable*, the way in which, while struggling with physical weaknesses that would have rendered another conscious only of his own sufferings, he retained his simplicity and gentle thought-

fulness for others ; —all this might be impressed upon our school boys and girls with propriety and profit.

We believe therefore that if the literature requirement for admission to college comprised a somewhat extended study of the works of not more than two authors, together with a knowledge of the most important and most interesting portions of their biographies, and perhaps of some of the best critical essays on their works, it would be more efficient and would arouse a scholarly appetite that would gratify itself by a similar study of the works of other authors of high merit. After all, the truest education is that which teaches how properly to instruct one's self.

Permit us to show our meaning more fully by suggesting a scheme of reading that might be substituted for the one now in use. The two authors might be selected by the pupil, with the advice and approval of his instructor, from a list similar to the following.

LONGFELLOW. Extracts from the *Life* by Samuel Longfellow ; *Courtship of Miles Standish* ; *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, three parts ; *Hiawatha* ; *Evangeline* ; *Building of the Ship* ; and a selection of the best shorter poems like *The Skeleton in Armor*, and *The Village Blacksmith*.

HAWTHORNE. Extracts from the *Biography* by his son. *Tanglewood Tales* ; *Wonder Book* ; *Mosses from an old Manse* ; *Our Old Home* ; *The American Note Book* ; *The House of the Seven Gables*.

MACAULAY. Extracts from the *Life* by Trevelyan ; *History of England*, Chapters I-III ; The two essays on Pitt, and those on Goldsmith, Johnson, Clive, Hastings, Frederick the Great, and Addison ; *The Lays of Ancient Rome*.

SCOTT. Extracts from the *Life*, by Lockhart ; *Ivanhoe* ; *Kenilworth* ; *Quentin Durward* ; *The Talisman* ; *The Lady of the Lake* ; *Marmion*. In the same way the list might be extended so as to include Shakespeare, Tennyson, Thackeray, Irving, and Lowell.

The entire examination in English might then be somewhat as follows :—

I. A composition on some simple subject, not necessarily connected with the books read, to be written in the examination in order to show the applicant's ability to express himself clearly and correctly.

II. Six or twelve compositions on the prescribed course of reading, prepared at school and certified to by the last English instructor as in his opinion the unaided work of the pupil. It is probable that this requirement would do much to raise the standard of composition writing at the schools, and it is recommended by the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools.

III. A number of simple questions on the biographies and books read, avoiding dates as much as possible. The answers to these questions should be given at length.

IV. The correction of specimens of bad English.

The objection will probably be made to the scheme of reading proposed above that the variety which it offers is so great as to prevent class work on the required books. Our answer is that, where class work is necessary, a uniform selection may be made that we believe will be better in many respects than the present requirements, while for those who hold with the present writer that literature is not so much to be studied as to be enjoyed, a more attractive plan may be adopted.

The total freedom from books and from all restraint, which the long vacation gives for three months to school boys and girls, and to college students, is in many ways a serious injury to the cause of education and culture. If an arrangement could be made by which an hour or more a day during the summer could be spent, let us not say in the study, but in the enjoyment of the English classics, the books to be read might be compassed easily, and the refining influences of the system would be of great value. The work for college should be done during the summer before the last year at school, but such a system could be extended so as to include the other vacations of school and college. An examination in the fall on the main facts gone over would show whether the work has been properly done, and the reader might be encouraged to keep a note book which could also be submitted to the examiners.

It may be objected further that requirements so varied would entail extra work on the college examiners. We believe, however, that experiment will disprove this objection. On the contrary, the variety which will be given to the correction of the papers will render the work less laborious.

It has been charged by those who are in a position to know

that the English examination as at present conducted is a "form and little more," and it is certain that unless the colleges exact their nominal demands in English as rigorously as in other branches, the school work will not be done as well. For instance, instead of being asked such simple questions on the required books as would show whether these have been properly read, the candidate is often merely required to state whether or not he has read these books. What examiner in Greek or Latin would be satisfied with asking the applicant whether he has read his Homer or Cicero?

We believe that the systematic survey of English literature as a whole should be deferred to the college course, in order that as much historical knowledge and maturity of mind as possible may be brought into the subject. It is absurd, for example, to suppose that the average boy or girl of sixteen can read the works of Milton with profit. Indeed, the instructor in English at a New England college that required a portion of *Paradise Lost* makes the pathetic statement that those under his charge declared without exception that the works of Milton had not been enjoyed. As already said the great object of the study of literature in preparatory schools is to create as far as possible the true literary taste.

In the colleges too, in addition to the writing of essays, which, it is to be hoped, forms an important part of the curriculum of every department, systematic effort should be made to encourage the appreciation of the best English authors. As long ago as the time of Aristotle it was said, "There is a certain education which our sons should receive, not as being practically useful, nor as indispensable, but as liberal and noble. The endeavor of nature is, that men may be able, not only to engage in business rightly, but also to spend their leisure nobly." Is there not danger that this idea is being somewhat lost sight of in these days when so much energy is given to the founding of technical schools and the elaboration of college buildings? How many men in this year's graduating class at Yale or Harvard have read or will ever read *In Memoriam* or *The Commemoration Ode*? Self-development in education should be encouraged to the fullest extent. Culture is an impulse as well as a fact; which way one is going is quite as important as where one is.

Would that in every college in our land this subject of English

literature could be in the charge of men broad-minded and sympathetic enough to communicate to those under their instruction an impulse which should be lifelong. Would that in each one a course of lectures on English literature for the whole University could be established, well enough endowed to secure lecturers of the highest ability, who would be willing to avoid the technicalities so charming to the specialist, and devote their culture and eloquence to creating and stimulating a love for that which is highest and best in our noble literature.

We close with a reference to the slight attention which our colleges give to American authors. This is to be regretted. It is unusual to see among the courses of study any allusion to American literature. Indeed, one great University offers a course in Icelandic, but so far as indicated by its catalogue it does not provide for the study of any American author; while the neglect of our famous historians is equally conspicuous and equally lamentable. Lowell was speaking in behalf of American literature when he said "I venture to claim for literature an influence, whether for good or evil, more durable and more widely operative than that exerted by any other form in which human genius has found expression. As the special distinction of man is speech, it should seem that there can be no higher achievement of civilized men, no proof more conclusive that they are civilized men, than the power of moulding words into such fair and noble forms as shall people the human mind forever with images that refine, console, and inspire."

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